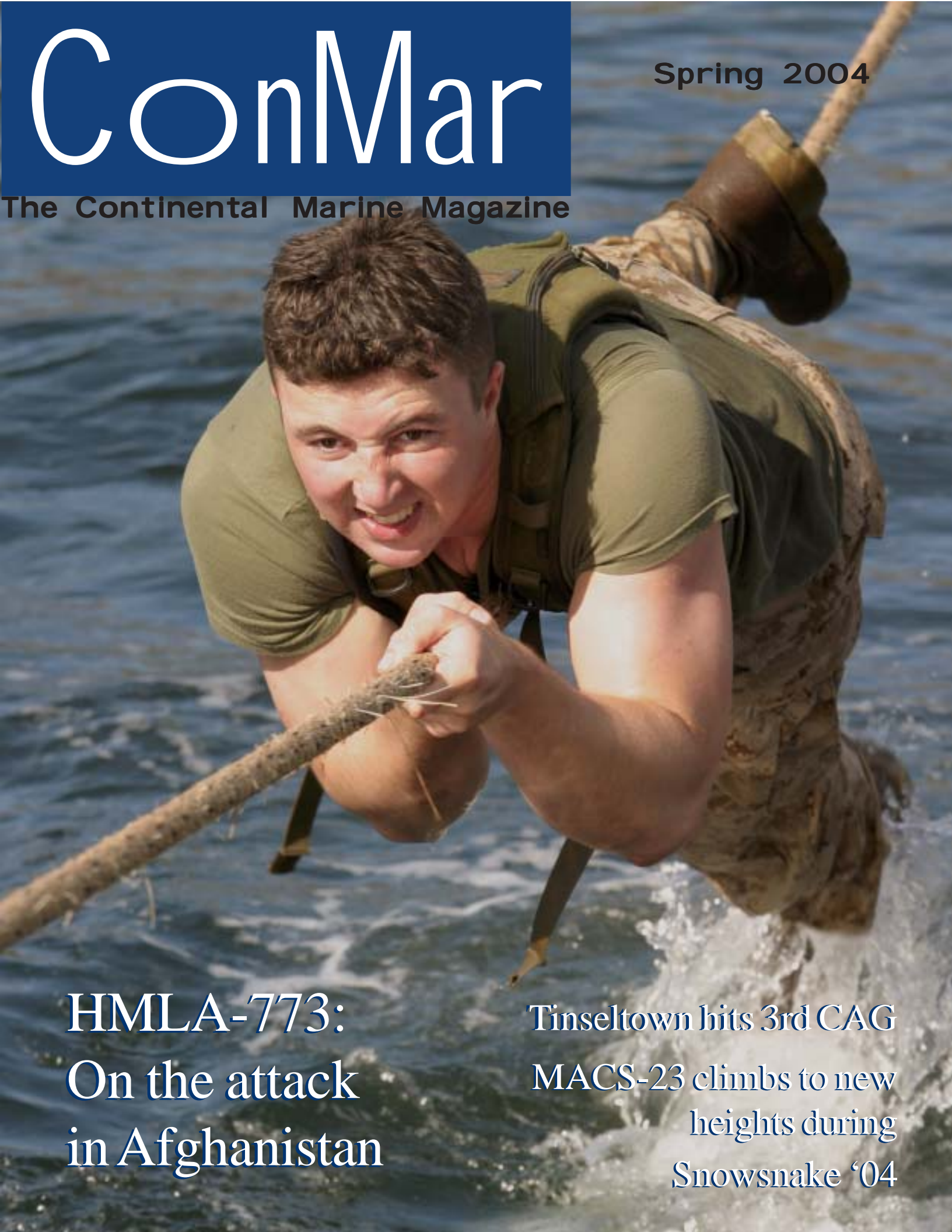


ConMar

Spring 2004

The Continental Marine Magazine



HMLA-773:
On the attack
in Afghanistan

Tinseltown hits 3rd CAG
MACS-23 climbs to new
heights during
Snowsnake '04

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Covers

Front: Lance Cpl. Elliot Danish, rifleman, 3/25, pulls himself across the cat crawl during the Nassau Run, which was part of the Dutch Bilat narco-terrorism training in Curacao. Photo by Cpl. Andrew Z. Williams.

Back: The moon rises over Camp Falcon at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, home to HMLA-773. Photo by Cpl. Lana D. Waters

This page:

A Cobra attack helicopter from HMLA-773 Altanta, fires at Observation Post Slats Range. Photo by Lance Cpl. Michael Nease

ConMar

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6th Engineer Support Battalion on cutting edge of family readiness

Cpl. Clinton Firstbrook

Headquarters Marine Corps

PENTAGON, Washington D.C. – The 6th Engineer Support Battalion received the 2003 Reserve Family Readiness Award in a ceremony at the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes Feb. 13.

The Reserve Family Readiness award, established by the Department of Defense in 2000, recognizes Reserve units that have greatly enhanced their deployability through family readiness programs, while maintaining mission accomplishment.

With 12 geographic sites and 13 units located throughout the United States, this 2,300 plus Reserve command is the largest battalion within MarForRes.

For the first time in 40 years, the entire battalion was activated Jan. 15, 2003, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This left the battalion's key volunteer network with the massive task of ensuring every servicemember's family in the deploying battalion was prepared for the departure.

"I was extremely honored to receive the award on behalf of all of the battalion," said Lt. Col. Roger Machut, 6th ESB commanding officer. "It wasn't just the volunteers and Marines that helped us earn this award, the families themselves helped out as well. Everyone throughout the battalion was a part of this."

"We had 1,600 to 1,800 Marines and Sailors deployed at all times," said Lt. Col. Michael Barnes, 6th ESB Peacetime/Wartime Support Team officer in charge.

"We wanted to be proactive with all of the families, so we did as much as possible to keep them informed about the operation," said Kimball Wallis, 6th ESB Key Volunteer Network coordinator. "Our success was due to the many volunteers that came forward to help out."

"I remember when my husband was a Marine and how I felt when he had to deploy," said Key Volunteer Kathleen Cason. "I was so desperate for someone to talk to; so when my son deployed, I wanted to share my feelings with anyone else that was in a similar situation."

The family support network, formed of hundreds of key volunteers scattered throughout the United States, distributed relevant information through phone trees, newsletters and family days. Many other programs came about including Home Town Heroes.

Originally started by the parent of a 6th ESB Headquarters and Service Company Marine, it has since expanded and grown into a program to help all family members of deployed service men and women in Oregon and southwest Washington.

Home Town Heroes was designed to connect deployed



Cpl. Clinton Firstbrook

L to R: Lt. Col. Ian Ferguson, Pentagon Reserve Affairs; Lt. Gen. Dennis M. McCarthy, commander, Marine Forces Reserve; Lt. Col. Roger Machut, commanding officer, 6th ESB; Harvey Barnum, Vietnam War Medal of Honor recipient; Rosemary McCarthy; Kimball Wallis, 6th ESB Key Volunteer Network coordinator; Joanne Wallis; and Lt. Col. Michael Barnes, 6th ESB Peacetime/Wartime Support Team.

Marines' family members in need of support with someone who could best help them out. For example, a spouse with a broken car who cannot afford to fix it is directed to an auto mechanic who will fix it for free or at cost.

"I literally had people pounding on my door every day that wanted to help or donate items," said Barnes. "One day, a Girl Scout troop came to my office and said they wanted to adopt one of our units over in Iraq and send them some cookies. The next thing I saw in my office was 24 cases of Girl Scout cookies."

"I was in country for about two months, and the Girl Scout cookies were the first non-family care package I received," said Cpl. Jeremy Willett, 6th ESB radio operator. "Every day for almost a month, we received Girl Scout cookies. It was a huge morale booster for the Marines in my unit, and it reminded us all of home."

"While my husband was over in Iraq, I received an \$800 water bill and found out my water main had broken," said Bobby Coine. "So, I contacted Home Town Heroes that morning; and later that day, someone came out to my home and took care of the problem. I'm thankful there are people out there who are willing to help."

The Marines and Sailors of 6th ESB left for Iraq mid-February 2003 and returned home mid-June 2003. Some servicemembers from the battalion are still being sent to and from the Middle East, and one unit is set to leave within the next few months.

The success 6th ESB enjoyed on the battlefield could not have been possible without the unwavering support it received from its families on the homefront, said Barnes.

"Because we have units still deploying to Iraq, we're continually updating our family readiness programs," said Wallis. "Everything is working smoothly, but it could always be better."

Toys for Tots

2003 campaign sets new record

Marine Corps Toys for Tots

Headquarters Marine Corps

Washington, D.C. – The results of the 56th annual U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots campaign, conducted during October, November and December 2003, have been tabulated: U.S. Marines distributed 15 million new toys to 6.6 million needy youngsters.

This was the most successful campaign in the 56-year history of Toys for Tots.



This monumental accomplishment is a tribute to the tireless work and dedication of the 456 local campaign coordinators, the Marine Forces Reserve staff and the staff of the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation as well as the outstanding support of a broad sector of corporate America and millions of caring Americans.

Toys for Tots began with a single local campaign in Los Angeles in 1947 and was increased to campaigns in 74 communities in 1948 – the year Toys for Tots was expanded nationwide. Fifty-five campaigns later in 2003, local Toys for Tots campaigns were conducted in 456 communities throughout the nation – the most extensive coverage in the history of the program.

Toys for Tots, the U.S. Marine Corps' premier community action program and one of the nation's flagship Christmas charitable causes, is dedicated to "delivering a message of hope and bringing the joy of Christmas" to America's needy children.

Country-western singer and TV star Billy Ray Cyrus, the 2003 national spokesman for Toys for Tots, promised to get a

Marine "high and tight haircut" if we were able to reach 7,000,000 children this year. We came close enough to scare Billy Ray's manager (Al Schiltz).

For further details contact Lt. Gen. Matthew T. Cooper, USMC (Ret) or Maj. Brian A. Murray, USMC (Ret) at (703) 640-9433 or visit the TFT website at www.toysfortots.org.

Toys for Tots 2003 top mentions

***Outstanding Nonprofit
Organization of the Year***

DMA Nonprofit Federation

Best Children's Charity

Reader's Digest

***Marine Toys for Tots
Foundation is named as
one of the 10 charities on
the 2003 Forbes
"Gold-Star" list.***

"I pledge allegiance to the flag..."

Staff Sgt. Julia Watson

PWST, Riverton, Utah

Salt Lake City, Utah – Marine and Sailors from Charlie Company, 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, Camp Williams, Riverton, Utah, lead the state legislators in the "Pledge of Allegiance" at the Utah State Capitol recently to open the 10th day of lawmaking.

"Sessions begin with the pledge following a prayer before the floor opens to debate Utah's current legislative bills," said Representative John Dougall, state representative for District 27, who invited HM1 Andrian Wihongi, Navy corpsman, Company C. "Each representative is responsible for providing someone to lead the pledge, and I couldn't think of any one better to lead them" than Wihongi.



Staff Sgt. Julie Watson

L to R: Sgt. Curt Sundell III, HM1 Andrian Wihongi and Cpl. Jonathan Weeks lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Wihongi took two Marines from the company with him: Sgt. Curt Sundell III from Orem, Utah, and Cpl. Jonathan Weeks from South Jordan, Utah.

"I wanted leaders of our state to recognize the Marine and Naval reserves who drill and work among the community. At times, we have gone unnoticed due to the large number of Army and Air Guard in Utah," Wihongi said.

Following the pledge, Dougall spoke of Company C's operational highlights and achievements, including the unit's participation in Operation Enduring Freedom, Iraq, and several exercises in Southeast Asia under the Unit Deployment Program.

After hearing of the unit's accolades, all house members and visitors stood and applauded Wihongi, Sundell and Weeks for their service.



Shane L. Darbonne

Sgt. Juan Robledo, MORDT administration augment, reviews HMM-774 record books during the unit's recent inspection. No-notice inspections are held to ensure units are ready to deploy.

Is your unit ready?

No-notice test gives commanders true readiness assessment

Shane L. Darbonne

Marine Corps Reserve Support Command

MCRSC, Kansas City, Mo. – During the Global War on Terrorism, many commanders may wonder how ready their unit is to be mobilized. They may have concerns about their personnel administration, embarkation, or medical/dental readiness. These concerns can now be addressed with factual, hard-line data.

Since October, Marine Corps Reserve Support Command has been home to the new Marine Forces Reserve Mobilization Operational Readiness Deployment Test. The new MORDT is a no-notice assessment and has five graded mobilization areas: embarkation, personnel administration, recall & muster, medical/dental and remain behind.

"This is more streamlined, this is more to the point," said Col. Paul Hastings, HMM-774 commanding officer, Norfolk, Va. "This inspection is getting to the nitty-gritty of what really needs to be

emphasized with respect to 'are you ready to go?'"

The new no-notice aspect of the MORDT may be a bitter pill to swallow, but "no-notice inspection, I think, is the right answer," said Lt.Col. Tom Nelson, HMM-774 executive officer. "With that, you're going to get an honest inspection. It may not be exactly what you want to hear, but it's going to be an honest assessment."

MCRSC's MORDT assessors tested their procedures in December by conducting five ungraded MORDTs. The locations and types of units varied: Landing Support Company Charlie, Charleston, S.C.; 3rd Force Reconnaissance Company, Mobile, Ala.; HMM-774, Norfolk, Va.; General Support Maintenance Company, Rock Island, Ill.; and 4th Air/Naval Gunfire Liaison Company, West Palm Beach, Fla.

The grading scale for a MORDT is cut-and-dry. A unit is either mobilization capable or not. Mobilization capable units have no more than one of their GMA's

needing assistance and participation is 90 percent or higher. Not mobilization ready units have two or more GMA's needing assistance or participation is less than 90 percent.

The term "needing assistance" is defined as having three or more findings. Findings are those accumulations of discrepancies that could adversely affect the unit's morale or its ability to mobilize. Discrepancies are counted as having a greater than 10 percent error rate in an area, checklist items not being maintained or checklist data being out of date.

A typical MORDT team is comprised of a senior assessment officer, a senior enlisted advisor, an embarkation assessor, an administration assessor and a medical/dental assessor. Each team is task-organized around the type of unit being assessed.

"As the SAO, it is my mission to be the overall liaison between the unit commander and the assessment team in carrying out MFR's directives in implementation of the MORDT," said Col. Dan Mater, MORDT team SAO. "My biggest challenge is establishing a firm, but fair, relationship with the unit commander. I try to immediately establish a climate of trust and confidence between the unit commander and the team."

To aid both the units being assessed and the assessors themselves, MCRSC has a web page that is specifically tailored

*The following MFR units
underwent inspections:*

December

4th ANGLICO, West Palm Beach, Fla.
3rd Force Recon, Mobile, Ala.
Det, GS Maint Co (-), Rock Island, Ill.
HMM-774, MAG 42, Norfolk, Va.
C Co., Landing Supt Co., Charleston, S.C.

January

Trk Co. (-), HqBn, 4th MarDiv, Erie, Pa.
MP Co. B, HqBn, 4th FSSG, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Eng Supt Co. C, 6th ESB, Peoria, Ill.
MWSS-472 (-), MWSSG 47, Willow Grove, Pa.
Det A, MWSS-472, Wyoming, Pa.
Det B, MWSS-472, Chicopee, Mass.

February

Engr Supt Co. (-), 6th ESB, Battle Creek, Mich.
Bridge Co. A, 6th ESB, Battle Creek, Mich.
6th Comm Bn (-), Brooklyn, N.Y.
Det. Ord Maint Co., 4th Maint Bn, Ft. Devins, Mass.
Det .Comm Co., HqBn, 4th MarDiv, Indianapolis
MP Co. A, HqBn, 4th FSSG, Lexington, Ky.

to meet all questions before, during and after the MORDT.

“Putting up the checklists and making them accessible via the web greatly enhances the ability of the MFR units to comply with the guidance from MFR regarding MORDT and mobilization issues,” said Nelson.

“I know we’ve got an outstanding team here at the squadron,” said Lt.Col. John McGonagle, incoming commanding officer of HMM-774, “and this MORDT will be a great baseline for me. There’s nothing better than having a very recent inspection to refocus you as a CO.”

The MORDT assessors may well have been viewed in a harsh light in years gone by, but today’s assessors are tasked with being instructors and facilitators.

“What we’re trying to do is find out ‘Is this unit ready to go or not?’ If it’s not, what are the areas they need to focus on and improve?” said Mater. “We want the unit to be mobilization capable. We want to do everything we can to enable them to get to the theater.”

For more information refer to
<http://mcsc.mfr.usmc.mil/MORDT/>.



Shane L. Darbonne

HM2 Reo Hagood, corpsman, HMM-774 administers shots to Marines at the medical station during an inspection.



Shane L. Darbonne

Sgt. Frankie Almonte, legal chief, explains benefits and rights to Marines during a brief at the legal station during an inspection.

No LIGHTS, No CAMERA but plenty of ...



An actor portraying an Iraqi screams at Sgt. Veronica Cortez, civil affairs specialist, 3rd Civil Affairs Group, during preparation for the unit's Iraqi deployment.

Marines take center stage at San Diego studio

SAN DIEGO – Inside a studio, Marines from 3rd Civil Affairs Group recently participated in military operations in urban terrain training to prepare for their upcoming Iraqi deployment.



U.S. Marine Reserves with 3rd Civil Affairs Group arrest an 'Iraqi' role player during Military Operations in Urban Terrain training.

Cpl. matthew J. Apprendi

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

Creating and fortifying a strong relationship between the people of Iraq and the United States presence will be their primary goal while deployed, according to Capt. Steve Coast, 3rd CAG training officer.

With most of their civil affairs training complete, the Marines took the opportunity to polish their abilities as riflemen.

"There's a very fine line between civil affairs and being a Marine – we have to mesh the two together to complete our mission," Coast said. "We don't have a choice, we could be completing civil affairs operations



An actress dons an Iraqi headdress during military operations in urban terrain training at a mock Iraqi village at Stu Seagall Productions.

and all of a sudden we are taking in fire – we have to switch modes to control that threat.”

The training placed the Reserves in a simulated Iraqi town that featured gas stations, taxis, houses and professional role players eating, drinking and talking to each other in full Iraqi costumes on the streets and in cafes.

“This is the most real-life training we can possibly give them in preparation for their deployment,” he said.

The CAG encompasses volunteer Marines from numerous military occupational specialties such as infantrymen, mechanics and radio operators. This gives the CAG a wealth of backgrounds to complete humanitarian operations, according to Coast.

“We’re a melting pot from all around the Marine Corps,” he said.

While touring through the mock village, the six-man civil

affairs team approached an Iraqi woman sweeping in front of a shop.

“We have to treat everyone as a threat – you just never know,” said Sgt. Mark Corrado, a civil affairs specialist. “This training gives us the techniques and tactics to defend ourselves if something were to go wrong.”

The Iraqi lady began with polite gestures saying “hello” and asking the Marines to come inside the shop. With smiles on their faces, two members of the team approached the lady, other Marines provided security.

“We’re the ones going out in the community to meet with people to build a strong relationship,” said Corrado, who also works in the K-9 Division of the Passaic County Sheriff’s Department, N.J. “There could be a bridge

that needs to be built for a village. We’re going to be the ones to make that happen through the relationships we make.”

When the Marines entered the shop, not all of the Iraqis welcomed them with open arms. Some shouted, “What are you doing here? Get out!” The Marines calmly stated they were there as friends.

Just as the situation seemed resolved,

however, a man in the back of the café reached inside of his jacket pocket.

By quickly switching modes, the Marines de-escalated the threat by throwing the man to the floor and searching him. After finding and confiscating a pistol, they had to calm down the innocent Iraqis.

This was just one of many scenarios the Marines coped with during the exercise. The facility, operated by Strategic Operations, boasts not only realistic scenarios, but also a visual system that captures the training scenarios for the CAG to analyze afterwards.

“There are video cameras located all over the training site to monitor the Marines so they can evaluate their performance,” said Kit Lavell, Strategic Operations, Inc., executive vice president. “We even have the ability to zoom as far in as the trigger of a Marine’s weapon to tell if they got a round off in time to kill the enemy.”

Because of this technology, 3rd CAG is able to review these scenarios to see what they did correctly and what they need to improve upon before they start up a new scenario, Lavell explained.

“I feel real prepared going over there,” said Lance Cpl. Billy Howard, civil affairs specialist from Florence, Ala. “Our training has eliminated anything that could be a surprise.”

*Photos by
Cpl. Matthew J. Apprendi*



A Marine from 3rd Civil Affairs Group peeks around a structure before advancing into a mock Iraqi town during military operations in urban terrain training at Stu Seagall Productions in San Diego.

Combat crash course

Reserve Marines sweat now, save blood later



Lance Cpl. Darius Seay, landing crew support specialist, Charlie Company, 4th Landing Support Battalion, Charleston, S.C., recovers from the effects of a tear gas grenade during training.

Lance Cpl. Samuel Bard Valliere

Lance Cpl. Samuel Bard Valliere
Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton

MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif. — In the first weeks of the new year, they may have been hanging around the office sipping on gourmet coffee. Now, a group of Iraq-bound Reserve Marines have sucked air and sniffed tear gas in hopes that a little sweat now, will save blood later.

Before joining the 1st Force Service Support Group on its way to Iraq, about 120 Reserve Marines from 4th Maintenance

Battalion and 4th Landing Support Battalion kicked off a weeklong training regimen Jan. 26, designed to bolster their combat skills.

"I expect to get something out of it," said Lance Cpl. Charles S. Curren, a landing support specialist from Charleston, S.C. "Hopefully, I'll learn a lot. It might save my life while we're over there."

The FSSG's Combat Skills Training School hosted the Reserve unit at Camp De Luz here, starting the week off with a rigorous endurance course that tested the Marines' strength and determination both as individuals and as a team. The course featured eight obstacles spread out over a three-mile, hill-laden stretch of Camp Pendleton countryside.

The pinnacle of the course, and the most challenging obstacle for most of the reserves, forced Marines to crawl under a twisted net of barbed wire right after the school's instructors tossed tear gas grenades onto their path.

"We have the (tear gas) that gets all over your face and eyes so you can't see," said Sgt. Manuel E. Molina, a combat skills instructor. "When you get out of there you don't know where you're going."

Throughout the fast-paced course, the Marines worked together and, when it seemed like a Marine was giving up on himself, they encouraged him to press on.

"A lot of us were motivating one another," said Lance Cpl. Jacob A. Mintz, Charlie Co., 4th Landing Support Battalion, based in Charleston. "It's as much an individual effort as it is a team effort, and everybody has to put out."

The Reserves were determined to get as much from the training as they could.

"It's not that they know less; it's that they have less training," said Staff Sgt. Alejandro Quiroz, the school's chief instructor. "A lot of times the Reserves come more motivated because they don't train all the time."

The majority of the instructors are not only infantry Marines assigned to the FSSG, but also veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Although their experience in Iraq assists them in specializing the training, Quiroz insists the effectiveness of the training comes down to each Marine's determination to do his best.

"We play like we fight," he said. "And if you do it well here, you're going to do it well there."

After the endurance course, the Marines had a week of training ahead of them, including practical application on convoy operations, rear-area security and enemy prisoner of war handling – all challenges they may face in Iraq.

The course isn't just for Reserve Marines either. All Marines in the 1st FSSG, whose primary mission is to provide support to combat arms elements of I Marine Expeditionary Force, attend the training annually to keep their combat skills sharp. In order to provide the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and 1st Marine Division with the sustainability, adaptability and range they need to accomplish their mission, FSSG Marines must be right alongside their I MEF partners, trained to fight if needed.



Lance Cpl. Samuel Bard Valliere

Combat Skills Training School Instructor Sgt. Clifton Coffey looks on as a Reserve Marine from Charlie Company, 4th Landing Support Battalion, crawls under a blanket of barbed wire, while a cloud of tear gas envelops him during the Endurance Course.

About 25,000 I MEF Marines and Sailors are scheduled to deploy to Iraq over the course of the year to help secure and rebuild the recently liberated country.



Lance Cpl. Samuel Bard Valliere

Lance Cpl. Russell L. Halvarson, landing crew support specialist with Charlie Company, 4th Landing Support Battalion, Charleston, S.C., has his eyes washed out after being "attacked" by a tear gas grenade thrown by an instructor from the Combat Skills Training School.

RAS team whets desert skills

Lance Cpl. Michael Nease

Marine Corps Air Station Yuma Public Affairs Office

MCAS Yuma – Members of a newly formed rear area security team packed into the back of a 7-ton truck in the cool, early-morning air. Underneath the canvas cover, the truck was dark and still. Occasionally some Marines would joke quietly, but most stared pensively at the floor or out of the back flap at the rising sun. They fiddled with their wedding rings. They were waiting for the 7-ton to take them into the desert.

But they weren't headed for the Afghanistan desert, not yet. On this day, they were headed out to practice land navigation in the desert where "Rambo III" and "Spaceballs" were filmed.

Twenty Reserve Marines from Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron-773 have come together to form the team and provide security for their squadron's upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

The RAS team, made up of mostly helicopter mechanics, completed its

training here under the supervision of Master Sgt. David Cortazzo, Marine Wing Support Squadron-371's squadron gunnery sergeant, who has worked closely with the new team since their training began Feb. 5.

"A lot of people have a misunderstanding about rear area security," said Cortazzo. "In today's climate, and whole big scheme of things, there is no rear area. Wherever you're at out there is the fighting grounds. We are in the back yard of the bad guy, basically, so there is no rear area. Wherever they are laying, that's where they're going to fight. There is no line of departure for the front, or the battlefield; they are in the battlefield."

Over the past two weeks, Cortazzo and other station Marines have given classes and conducted practical application exercises for the team on land navigation, field radios, enemy prisoner of war handling, range cards, explosive ordnance disposal, and convoy and helicopter



Cpl. Chip Bunch and Lance Cpl. Dean Krantz identify the direction of their target point on the Lake Martinez Land Navigation Course outside Yuma, Ariz.

This page: Lance Cpl. Dean Krantz peers through his lensatic compass, during the land navigation exercises.

*Photos by
Lance Cpl. Michael Nease*



A squad of rear area security Marines lines up to board a CH-53E Super Stallion during desert skills training.

operations. The team has also learned the characteristics, nomenclature and how to break down and put together the M240G, M-2 machine guns and the MK-19 automatic grenade launcher. They also fired thousands of rounds from pistols, shotguns and, of course, M-16A2 service rifles.

"We've given each Marine the chance to know that he's handled all these weapons, he's done a live fire from a vehicle, he's flown in helicopters, he's handled radios and he's land navigated," said Cortazzo. "Those are some of the skills he needs to know. Once they get to Afghanistan, there's not a lot of time to learn it or teach it, so we try to get it done before the Marine actually gets there."

Staff Sgt. James Nickerson, a father of eight, leads the RAS team and knows that training in this desert environment will help them during their deployment.

"Right here you can get a good appreciation for the terrain and how many holes there are to hide in," said Nickerson. "Looking out there, it seems like it's flat. But if you really focus on the terrain, you can see a lot of features that are berms. You can hide entire platoons behind those berms and never notice them."

To finish the training evolution, the team fired live rounds from a convoy in coordination with Cobra helicopters firing AGM 114K Thermobaric Hellfire Missiles.

The team was then extracted by CH-53E helicopters. The Marines were then inserted at Adair Range, where they received a four-hour class on weapons they were likely to face on the

battlefield. The team even had the opportunity to shoot some of those weapons.

The class on enemy weapons was given by Walter Puczkowskyj, a Vietnam veteran and gun collector, and included weapons made by the British, Russians, many eastern-European countries and others. Station Logistics Officer Maj. John Capps helped organize the class and served as the range safety officer.

"Unfortunately, Marines go through basic training and get familiarized with our weapons systems, but they don't have time to get familiarized with our enemy's," said Capps. "I think it's very important that they learn (the enemy's weapons) because, like in Vietnam, there were plenty of weapons out there, and as they're finding out, in Afghanistan and Iraq, it's the same thing. They're coming across weapons from all over the world, and they may have to pick them up, turn them around and use them."

The Marines of the RAS team are from two separate reserve units and are using this training to not only learn their mission, but also to learn more about each other before they deploy.

"We don't have any conflicts, we just need to get our camaraderie together more," said Cpl. James Loemker, a maintenance administration clerk. "This training is definitely helping. Anytime we break a weapon down, we'll switch up the teams then swap it up and get to know each other. We all try to go to chow together, to the gym, to play ball and to get to know each other as much as we can."

The Marines all got a good laugh at the expense of their brothers who became air sick on the helicopter ride to Adair Range.

"The helicopter ride was alright," said Lance Cpl. Jerome Matthews, laughing. "I got a little sick on it, but I'm lucky I found out now rather than find out (in Afghanistan). At least I'll be used to it now."

Maj. Steve Peters, the officer in charge of the RAS team, spent much of the training evolution with his Marines and was visibly pleased with their performance.

"I'd like to commend the professionalism of these Marines. The thing that impresses me most is that they're all eager to go. The impression that I have is that they're extremely motivated, enjoyed the training and (Sept. 11, 2001) is still fresh in everybody's mind," said Peters. "This is just outstanding that they're willing to do what is necessary to defend our freedoms, and there's no better place to do that than Afghanistan."



An AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopter from HMLA-773, Atlanta, fires Hellfire Missiles as well as flares during training. The unit's training is for its upcoming Operation Enduring Freedom deployment to Afghanistan.

Columbus Reserves christen new home

JO2 Dan Heaton

Naval/Marine Corps Reserve Center, Columbus

NMCRC Columbus, Ohio – A dedication of a \$10.5 million Navy and Marine Corps Reserve Center at Rickenbacker International Airport, Feb. 7, gave 900 Sailors and Marines a new home.

“The local men and women of the Naval Reserve and Marine Corps Reserve play an important role in the defense of our nation and are an important and positive part of our city,” said Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman, who was among the VIPs attending the ceremony. The mayor’s son, John D. Coleman, was also at the ceremony – standing in ranks as a Marine private first class.

The new center was dedicated in honor of Marine Corps Reserve Chief Warrant



JO3 Sandra Cho

At parade rest on the drill deck of the new Columbus Naval/Marine Corps Reserve Center, the “Blue-Green Team” is represented by Company L, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines, and several units of the Naval Reserve including a submarine unit, a SEAL team, and a SeaBee detachment.

Officer Richard Holycross, who was killed in action Sept. 10, 1967, in Vietnam.

Holycross and his platoon were exposed to enemy fire and overrun as they bought time for fellow Marines to escape to safety.

Only days earlier, Sept. 7, 1967, Holycross organized a successful counterattack against superior enemy forces that threatened a Marine headquarters camp. The Marine Corps honored Holycross’ leadership by posthumously awarding him the Silver Star for gallantry in action.

Holycross also served as an infantryman in the Korean War and returned home to become a Columbus police officer, while continuing his service in the reserves.

In 1966, he volunteered to return to active duty for service in Vietnam.

“The Marine Corps Reserve, to this day, is filled with people serving with the dedication and devotion to duty exhibited by Dick Holycross,” said Lt. Gen. Dennis M. McCarthy, commander, Marine Forces Reserve, and a Columbus native.

During the dedication, McCarthy told local Marines he

is pushing for a new promotion line to allow senior platoon sergeants in the Marine Corps Reserve to become warrant officers, like Holycross. Infantry specialists are not currently eligible to become warrant officers in the Marine Reserve, but McCarthy said he hopes that will change and views the inspirational leadership of Holycross as a catalyst for a new program.

McCarthy first heard of Holycross’ bravery when he was a young officer serving with a Columbus-area Marine Reserve unit.

“It wasn’t hard to get Marines to talk about the bravery of Dick Holycross,” McCarthy said. “The inspirational story of Dick Holycross has stayed with me during my service as a Marine.”

The new NMCRC is the fifth facility to house Naval Reserves in Columbus. The first center opened in a storefront location on East Goodale Street near downtown in 1921.

The new center will mark the first time in Columbus that Sailors from both surface support and air support will be consolidated in one location.

“This new center is not only more cost effective, but also capable of expanding. It will allow us to continue improving and increasing the Naval Reserve footprint here in Columbus,” said Geisinger.



PH2 Louis Brennan

As part of the official opening of the new Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center in Columbus, Rear Adm. Duret S. Smith cuts the ribbon while (from left) Maj. Jeffrey Eichholz, Chief John D. Barrett, Lt. Gen. Dennis M. McCarthy and Cmdr. Larry K. Geisinger stand by.

Keeping the Force at full throttle



Official USMC photo

Staff Sgt. Phillip M. Reimers, 2nd Transitional Recruiting Office, Camp Lejeune, N.C., informs Marines, like Sgt. Marquis Cannon, about opportunities available to them in the Selected Marine Corps Reserve.



Staff Sgt. Jonathan Agee

Staff Sgt. Sean Kennedy, Prior Service Recruiting Site Worcester, Mass., provides information and assists former Marines with entry into the Selected Marine Corps Reserve.

Marine Corps honors the best of the best

Sgt. Jimmie Perkins

Marine Corps Recruiting Command

MCB QUANTICO, Va. — Marine Corps Recruiting Command recently announced the Transitional and Prior Service Recruiters of the Year for fiscal year 2003. The Prior Service Recruiter of the Year is Staff Sgt. Sean Kennedy, PSR Site Worcester, Mass., 1st District. The Transitional Recruiter of the Year is Staff Sgt. Phillip M. Reimers, 7th Transitional Recruiting Office, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Both Marines expressed their pride in receiving these recognitions.

“Given that I have only a year and a half on the street as a recruiter, it is a really big honor,” said Reimers.

“It’s always very rewarding to be recognized as the best at what you do, but when you factor in the competition of this elite organization we proudly call our Corps, it’s even more rewarding,” said Kennedy.

These Marines fill vital rolls in sustaining the ranks of the Selected Marine Corps Reserve by keeping highly trained Marines within the fold of the Marine Corps, while providing placement and work for Marines whose active duty service has come to a close.

Transitional recruiters inform all Marines leaving active duty about the opportunities available to them in the SMCR. This is often done through career counseling sessions and Transitional Assistance Program classes. Transitional recruiters also assist Marines with less than 30-days of separation time with orders to a local reserve unit.

“It is important to educate the younger Marines that they still have a reserve obligation after their first term, and that if they choose, they can fulfill that obligation with a paid job serving in a reserve unit near their home,” said the Billings, Mont., native.

For Reimers, the task was made challenging by the impact of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Global War on Terrorism.

“My biggest challenge last year was the stop-loss order, because nobody got out for about six months,” said Reimers. “There were also some OIF veterans who were hesitant about transitioning to the reserves and redeploying back to Iraq so soon with reserve units.

“But there are also many Marines who are looking to the reserves as an opportunity to deploy and participate directly in the Global War on Terrorism,” he said.

Kennedy also agrees that the current pace of operations has placed added importance on the work he and his fellow prior service recruiters do.

“Under the total force concept, our modern day Marine Corps depends on its reserve components to accomplish the mission,” said the Canton, Mass., native. “Prior service recruiters, like myself, work daily to keep those reserve ranks healthy with prior service Marines, officer and enlisted, who are standing at the ready to mobilize and go to the fight.”

For Marines with longer periods of separation, prior service recruiters, such as Kennedy, inform and assist former Marines in their entry into the SMCR.

“The greatest satisfaction comes from helping Marines. Many prior service Marines miss the Marine Corps and all of the intangibles that make our rod and gun club so special,” said Kennedy. “Every month, we join Marines back and help them to fill that void in their lives as well as get them back on the road to a career that they have already invested in.”

Reimers is equally rewarded by helping Marines stay involved with the Marine Corps, “I find satisfaction in being able to find a Marine a guaranteed reserve job at home, helping both that Marine, and the Marine Corps out at the same time.”

Paradise provides perfect play place

U.S., Dutch Marines train to combat narco-terrorism

Gunnery Sgt. Mike Dougherty

Marine Forces South Public Affairs Office

CURACAO, Netherlands Antilles – The many facets of the Global War on Terror have carried Marines to various parts of the planet, from Afghanistan to the Philippines to the Horn of Africa. This year, it took a group of Reserves to the Caribbean island of Curacao, where they trained to combat the gathering threat of narco-terrorism.

Marines from Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, left their Marine Corps Reserve Center in Moundsville, W.Va., to train with their Royal Netherlands Marine counterparts in Curacao.

Curacao, an island in the Dutch Antilles, is approximately 40 miles east of Aruba and 35 miles north of Venezuela. Its location, coupled with the volume of shipping and tourism it enjoys, make it a common thoroughfare for drug trafficking, according to 1stLt. Koen Postma, a platoon commander with the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps. Narco-terrorists have battled with local police and amongst themselves, and the Dutch military is preparing itself in the event its government calls it to action.

The West Virginia-based Marines teamed up with the Netherlands Marines' 31st Infantry Company for the two-week annual training evolution. "This is the best annual training that I've ever done, and this is the best place I've been in my 17 years in the Marine Corps," said Staff Sgt. Julian Galford, Kilo's company gunnery sergeant.

Scheduled events covered a broad range of activities, including boat operations, patrolling, rappelling, mountaineering, a final field training exercise with a counter drug scenario and some liberty.

The majority of the first three days were spent in the water,



Cpl. Andrew Z. Williams

Lance Cpl. Justin McCrory of Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, rappels down a cliff below Fort Nassau in Curacao. The Marines were participating in Dutch Bilat I.

Lance Cpl. Stafford Boivin and Cpl. Jody Ickes (right) Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, conduct an assault from the water during amphibious operations of Dutch Bilat I, training with the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps.



Cpl. Andrew Z. Williams



Cpl. Andrew Z. Williams

Lance Cpl. John Ross, Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, descends down a cliff toward a boat below.

according to Cpl. Jody Ickes, infantryman from Berlin, Penn. The Marines conducted a swim qualification, which consisted of a number of surface strokes plus a lap underwater, followed by a simulated rescue and a 50-meter relay with a rifle.

The second day, they hit the water in inflatable boats to practice beach assaults. This gave the Marines an appreciation for amphibious operations, said Capt. Greg Hamilton, platoon commander and a San Diego native. "We don't get to do a lot of that in West Virginia, and you can't beat the water down here. It's crystal clear," he said.

For many of the Marines, the third day was their most memorable, as the Dutch Marines took them not only into the water, but also under its surface. The entire platoon participated in an introductory scuba diving program, and dove to a sunken tug boat resting close to shore in 20-feet of water. Lance Cpl. Elliot Danish of Newport News, Va., considered the experience the highlight of the training exercise. Danish never would have tried

diving had it not been for the unit expedition, he said, but he's glad he did it. "It was more than I expected. It felt like outer space ... gliding along."

For other Marines, the high point came the following week when they climbed the "Christoffelberg," which at 372 meters is the highest point on the island. The rock trail up the mountain was akin to climbing steep stairs with a pack for an hour. But once they reached the top, it was worth every step, said Lance Cpl. Timothy Beck, a fire team leader from Portage, Penn. "We could see the whole island, and we could see Venezuela and Bonaire," he said.

Two more days of live fire and patrolling prepared them for the field training exercise, where they returned to the island's higher terrain and phased into their counter-drug mission. The exercise scenario, written by the Dutch Marines, tasked the U.S. Marines to locate and destroy cells of a narco-terrorist organization funneling drug profits to "Al Qaeda" terrorists.

The Dutch played the role of aggressors, harassing the Americans and attempting to disrupt their patrolling activities. Members of Kilo Company located and destroyed the enemy in a surprise attack at its headquarters by "taking the least likely avenue of approach," said Hamilton. A team of three Marines fought their way several kilometers through extremely rugged terrain with sharp cacti and dense thorns restricting their movement.

The final training event in the two-week drill was a team competition called the Nassau Run, and was by far the greatest challenge the Dutch Marines provided, according to Sgt. Michael Crivellaro of Pittsburgh. After a 200-meter swim, the second event was a load-carry run up a small

mountain where the eight-man teams hauled five-gallon water cans. Once there, they rappelled down the backside one-by-one.

When the team was assembled at the bay below, they boarded a rubber craft and paddled to a concrete pillar some 60-meters offshore. There, they endured the "cat crawl," where they traversed the gap from the pillar to the pier by crawling a single rope on their stomachs. For every team member that fell in the water, four minutes was added to the team's time, said Crivellaro.

The sixth and final challenge was perhaps the easiest for the infantry platoon. It took them to the pistol range where they fired five shots at a 10-inch circle from 15-yards. Once completed, they were within sight of the finish line, and thoroughly exhausted.

"I haven't hurt this bad since boot camp," said Lance Cpl. Patrick Burgess of Pittsburgh, after crossing the finish line.

Overall, the training helped both groups increase their tactical proficiency and prepared them for the task of combating terrorism.

"The things we've done here I think they definitely carry over to the war on terrorism. They've already linked Al Qaeda to selling drugs, and that's the scenario right now. We're interdicting these terrorist cells that are working in cooperation with druglords - it's going on in the Middle East as we speak; so, it's definitely got some real-world aspects to it," said Hamilton.



Cpl. Andrew Z. Williams

A team of Marines from Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, paddles to shore during a beach assault.



Mark Turney

Marines from Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, and Marines from 31st Company, Royal Netherlands Marine Corps, practice insertion and extraction drills at Landing Zone Albatross, MCB Quantico, Va.

Training develops international relationships

Cpl. Shawn Vincent

Marine Corps Base Quantico

MCB QUANTICO, Va. — Swooping low in CH-53E helicopters over the concrete town in the hinterlands of Quantico, 44 Marines from the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps' 31st Company, readied themselves for a force-on-force fight.

Dutch Marines from Curacao, Netherlands Antilles, participated in a bilateral exchange with Reserve Marines from Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, Moundsville, W.Va.

The helicopters touched down, and the Royal Marines disembarked rapidly to take the military operations in urban terrain facility. Amid layers of multi-colored smoke, the men moved toward the first building never knowing when or where the first shots would ring out.

The first building was entered without a single shot being fired, and the Royals cleared the building. The second building was not so easy.

After the smoke cleared and the town was taken, all Marines gathered for a quick, but deeply detailed, debrief. Each Marine discussed their performance and dissected the mission.

"It was very good training for us. The MOUT site here is

much better than in Curacao," said Royal Marine 1st Lt. Job Holwerda, 2nd platoon commander, 31st Company.

After a hot meal, everyone gathered up their equipment to put the lessons learned to the test.

"You can see how we moved differently after the first time," said Cpl. Merlot Hoogveld. "We reacted better and were much more aware of our flanks the second time."

It was during these iterations, the Marines discovered small differences between their standard operating procedures.

Dutch Marines have smaller squads than U.S. Marines. While the Dutch Marines operate with an eight-man squad, the much beefier 13-man U.S. squad allows for more firepower on target.

"Our arm and hand signals are different than the U.S. Marines, but we generally understood each other," said Holwerda.

"I think the Dutch were really surprised by how close we brought the helicopters in during extractions," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert M. Kuhn, operations officer 3/25. "At one point, the helos were only a few feet over their heads before touching down."

An unexpected aspect of the training, which caught everyone

See INTERNATIONAL Page 25

From a suit to combat utilities: Clothes change, mission doesn't

Cpl. Matthew J. Apprendi

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

NEW ORLEANS — The civilian hat was hung; and the Marine cover squarely fitted when more than 3,000 Marine Reserves prepared for Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

While some Marines have civilian jobs completely unrelated to their military specialty, others enjoy occupations that merge and complement their role in the Reserves.

Marine Reserve Maj. Walt Green is one such Marine — his civilian expertise as the anti-terrorism coordinator and deputy criminal chief for the U.S. Attorney's office in Baton Rouge, La., should prove instrumental on the frontlines of Iraq. There, he is serving as a staff judge advocate with I Marine Expeditionary Force.

"I'm just really excited. It's time to do our part," he said. "I certainly did not want to be left behind."

As a Reserve, the Ferriday, La., native is a staff judge advocate with Marine Forces Reserve, Mobilization Detachment, New Orleans. He spent his drilling weekends traveling from unit to unit where he assisted mobilizing Marines.

In his civilian life, Green has been the anti-terrorism coordinator for federal agencies in Baton Rouge since 9-11. He has also advised the Baton Rouge-area Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council, a conglomeration of law enforcement agencies that identifies and investigates terrorist threats in the region.

"The actual investigating and charging process for crimes will be similar to what I did," Green said. "In the aspect of identifying terrorist threats, I hope my experience in Baton Rouge will help."

He attributes his civilian success to the Corps.

While attending Tulane University Law School, he received his commission via the Platoon Leaders Course. He has been a judge advocate since 1993. After



courtesy of Walt Green

Maj. Walt Green

completing his active duty career, he joined the U.S. Department of Justice in Las Vegas.

"Being a judge advocate prepared me so much for the federal court process, interacting and leading people; I made the change easy."

He still remembers his active-duty days fondly.

"Going to Thailand during Cobra Gold — it's a great memory of meeting people, seeing the sights and doing the operational law aspect," he said.

Green's assignments in Iraq will range from the legal aspects of humanitarian operations to handling claims against the United States for property damage.

More than 20,000 Marines are beside him as I MEF relieved the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne in the Sunni Triangle region west of Baghdad.

"The Reserve component is vital, and especially for this action because it's such a wide-front war; we are needed," Green adamantly states. "This is why we are here — not to drill once a month and the two weeks a year, but to remain prepared and fill in for active duty slots."

TSP: What are you doing to save?

W. R. Combs

Head, Retired Activities Section
Separation and Retirement Branch
HQ, U. S. Marine Corps

Defense officials are seeing a big problem concerning the Thrift Savings Plan: Not enough servicemembers are taking advantage of the program.

"We're trying to convince people that TSP is a good vehicle for savings," said Lt. Col. Janet Fenton, executive director of the Armed Forces Tax Council.

"The great thing about TSP is that it's tax-deferred in pretax dollar savings. So it comes out of your income, and you're not taxed on it until you use that money later, hopefully in your retirement."

TSP is also a good idea for people who don't plan to make a career of the military, because they can take their TSP with them when they leave active duty.

Those who leave active duty before retirement could roll their TSP into a 401K plan of a new civilian employer. It could be put into an IRA, or even left in TSP, but no more funds could be added to the account.

More than 220,000 servicemembers signed up for TSP in 2002, the first year the savings plan was opened to military personnel. That figure jumped to more than 390,000 at the end of the open season, which ended in December. For more information, see <http://www.military.com>.



Cpl. Lana D. Waters

The 'Red Dogs' of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron-773 have a new pound in Afghanistan to call home.

If you can't run with the 'Red Dogs'...

Cpl. Lana D. Waters

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan –

For the past six months, the Reserve Marines of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron-773, Marine Aircraft Group 42, have had a new home in Afghanistan.

The "Red Dogs," who originate from Atlanta and Belle Chasse, La., packed up their bags, six AH-1W Super Cobra helicopters and three UH-1N Huey helicopters in late October to deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Since their arrival, the Marines have been busy supporting ground forces with aerial cover and attacking opposition forces as needed.

"Our mission is just to attack," said Lt. Col. Don A. "Grover" Groves, commanding officer, HMLA-773, MAG 42. "We provide attack helicopter support for the guys on the ground while they are out doing missions. We have also been escorting both ground convoys and aviation convoys as they are running supplies from different places around here."

As a reserve squadron coming into theater, they have encountered a few problems, but the mission has not suffered.

"It's been a real growing experience on how to deal with non-Marine Corps units," Groves said. "We have done everything we have been asked to do,

and we haven't dropped one mission."

Groves believes one of HMLA-773's biggest accomplishment thus far was the successful mobilization to Afghanistan.

"We went from being a reserve unit to three weeks later bringing nine helicopters and 233 people into theater. We hit the ground, and three days later we were flying," said the Atlanta native. "Fourteen days after hitting the ground, we were flying our first missions."

This is the first activation for the Red Dogs since Operation Desert Storm in the early '90s. They are also the first helicopter squadron to be scheduled for a year-long deployment here, and the first reserve HMLA squadron to have known enemy

kills in a combat zone. Along with this list of firsts, the Red Dogs will soon add another.

"This will be the first time that a change of command of a reserve squadron is taking place in a combat zone in many years," said the soon-to-be departing commanding officer. "It will be a first for us."

The Red Dogs next goal is to return home with everyone and everything they took to Afghanistan.

"The biggest thing I want to happen is that ... we all came and we all go home," said Groves. "If that happens that means we did our job, we did it correctly and we accomplished the mission."



Cpl. Lana D. Waters

Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron-773 Marines huddle around the big screen to catch the big game Superbowl Sunday.

HMLA-773 fights its way into record books

Cpl. Lana D. Waters

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan – While many people were celebrating New Year's Eve, Reserve Marines from Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron-773, Marine Aircraft Group 42, here, were celebrating also, but for a much different reason.

HMLA-773 fired its way into Marine Corps history New Year's Eve by becoming the first reserve light attack squadron to have known enemy kills during wartime.

Two AH-1W Super Cobra helicopters manned by Maj. Eric "Junkie" Rosa, Cleve "Creature" McFarlane, Paul "Oz" Ozmer and Jay "Pepper" Borella were providing cover for an Army convoy when the convoy was attacked.

Ozmer explained the soldiers were leaving for a mission near the Pakistan border and heard from the locals in the area that there may be an ambush planned for them.

"We launched out about a half-hour before sunset," said Ozmer, pilot and logistics officer. "We found the convoy and began to patrol in the area. As we were patrolling overhead, about 30 minutes after sunset, the anti-coalition forces opened fire on the convoy."

The pilots spotted two gunmen firing at the mile-long convoy and were in good positions to engage the targets.

"We immediately rolled in to suppress the people that were firing at the friendly forces," said Borella, Ozmer's co-pilot. "We eventually made radio contact with the convoy commander who told us there were several bad guys in the hills."

"As we rolled in on the targets, we could see where the tracer fire was coming from the tree line toward the convoy; so that gave us a pretty good cue of where to put our ordnance," said Ozmer. "So, we opened up with 20mm cannons and hit the targets."

As the helicopters pulled away, Ozmer and the other pilot realized the convoy was still being fired on.

"We rolled back in, engaged the gun positions again and continued to fire on them until they both were silenced," said Ozmer.

However, that wasn't the end of their worries. When the pilots pulled back, they spotted a third gun firing at the middle of the convoy.

"We were in a good position that we could roll right in," said Ozmer, an Atlanta-based pilot. "We went ahead and took that position out as well."



Cpl. Lana D. Waters

Left to right: Maj. Jay "Pepper" Borella, Cleve "Creature" McFarlane, Eric "Junkie" Rosa and Paul "Oz" Ozmer are the first reserve light attack pilots to have known enemy kills during wartime.

After that attack, Ozmer recalled spotting a fourth position on the mountain, an observation post, which they hit with four rockets. At this point, the Marines knew the job had been completed.

"All-in-all, the action took maybe eight minutes from start-to-finish and was very interesting," said Ozmer.

After refueling and reloading ammunition, the Marines returned to escort the convoy to safety.

"We got them back to base safe and sound," said Borella, also an Atlanta-based pilot. "The soldiers that we talked to afterward said they thought things would have gone a lot worse if we were not there."

Even though the New Year's Eve mission may have been the first deadly confrontation for the "Red Dogs" of HMLA-773, effective training ensured they were prepared.

"I knew what Pepper was going to do behind me. I knew what Junkie and Creature were going to do in the other airplane," said Ozmer. "The practice we have running through different battle-drills and attack-patterns made it seem all very second-nature. If you train like you fight, then when you go into the fight, it will be just like you trained for."

"We were there; we did our job, and we reacted like we were trained to do," said Borella.

Although it was the pilots who were directly engaged with enemy fire, they don't take all the credit.

"It was four pilots up there pulling the triggers, but we never got where we were without the efforts of 200 other Marines on the ground to put us in the right place at the right time with the right equipment. It's one team; one fight," said Ozmer. "It's a great honor for the squadron to have this happen."

With 11 confirmed anti-coalition force kills under its belt, the Red Dogs forged its way into the Corps' illustrious history.

Snowsnake '04



Temperatures plunged into the negative territory every night during Snowsnake '04.

This page: Colorado Army National Guard Detachment 1, Echo Company, 168th Heavy Helicopter Aviation Regiment, headquartered at Buckley Air Force Base in Denver, Colo., provided aerial support during Snowsnake '04.

Photos courtesy of MACS-23



MACS-23 chills out in the Rockies

Sgt. Rob Henderson

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office



CAMP HALE, Colo. – When an average man’s core body temperature reaches 95 degrees Fahrenheit, he will begin to shiver. At 92 degrees, the shivering stops; and he will collapse. If left untreated, the man will continue to lose body heat until at 88 degrees Fahrenheit; he will go into cardiac arrest and eventually die.

Knowing the stages of hypothermia isn’t enough to keep a Marine alive in a cold-weather environment, but knowing the tell-tale signs of hypothermia, such as blue lips and numb fingers, will help a Marine save himself.

Reserve and active-duty Marines from Marine Air Control Squadron-23, headquartered in Aurora, Colo., recently conducted Snowsnake ‘04, a cold-weather training exercise at Camp Hale, Colo., to ready their Marines to take the fight to any clime or place.

“The focus was on introductory classes and basic survival skills,” said Gunnery Sgt. David G. McVay, operations chief and staff noncommissioned-officer-in-charge of Snowsnake ‘04, MACS-23. “It also offered excellent opportunities for Marines to sharpen their small unit leadership skills.”

Classes offered included: cold weather leadership, military snowshoeing, land navigation in an alpine environment, cold weather survival, and a host of other extreme cold weather-specific classes.

“It was unique, because it exposed the students to a wide array of winter skills in a very short time. The classes were tailored to meet the needs of Reserve units,



Students at Snowsnake ‘04 use a small hill to practice mobility skills wearing snowshoes.



Above: Marines check their snowshoes before the familiarization trek through the Colorado high country. Left: An instructor crawls from a snow shelter during a Snowsnake ‘04 class. Students at Snowsnake learned the basics of survival in a cold-weather environment.





since most units have only drill weekends to perform this kind of training, because the annual two-week training periods are usually reserved to enhance (military occupational specialty) proficiency,” said McVay.

Nearly 150 Marines participated in Snowsnake '04 as students, but they weren't the only Marines to benefit from the training evolution. The eight instructors, ranging in rank from corporal to gunnery sergeant, also took advantage of the training.

“For most of the instructors, Snowsnake '04 was their first opportunity to instruct Marines in something other than their primary MOS,” said Staff Sgt. Matthew A. Knight, supply warehouse chief and Snowsnake '04 instructor, MACS-23. “The instructors not only rose to the challenge of providing instruction in difficult subjects, they exceeded everyone's expectations.”

Daytime temperatures rarely rose above 20 degrees Fahrenheit, during the exercise, and nighttime temperatures reached as low as 30 below zero. The challenge for most of the Marines was overcoming their discomfort and continuing to function as a unit.

“The student squads at Snowsnake were established based on rank. This enabled the Marines to spend long periods of time working with others of the same rank that they had never worked with before,” said Knight. “The extreme nature of the training

also forced the Marines to work together as a cohesive unit in order to overcome the snow and cold.”

The Snowsnake evolution has been a part of MACS-23's training schedule for almost 20 years. The training area is the former home of the Army's 10th Mountain Division. The area was established as a training area in 1941, and the soldiers who trained there deployed to Europe where they used the skills they acquired in the Colorado Rockies to defeat the Germans and Italians in the Alps, according to Knight.

The Army left the area in the late 1940s, and it was not used for military operations until MACS-23 began conducting Snowsnake. Today, the area is the property of the U.S. Forest Service and has become a popular area for winter sports.

“There are thousands of acres open to cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiles. Although this was the first Snowsnake to be conducted since 1997, we hope that it will once again become a part of our annual training regimen,” said Knight.

Since the Persian Gulf War and fall of the Soviet Empire in 1991, the Marine Corps has focused on training in desert environments. The on-going war on terrorism finds Marines re-evaluating their ability to operate in cold and mountainous climates like those found in Afghanistan and Korea.

“I think the Marines had an outstanding time,” said Sgt. Thomas A. Bachman, unit diary chief and Snowsnake '04 instructor, MACS-23.

“All the Reserve Marines kept saying, ‘I can't believe we're getting paid for this.’ We weren't training these Marines to be cold mountain experts, we just wanted to teach them how to survive in a cold weather environment.”



3rd Force Recon. families learn TRICARE benefits

Sgt. Rob Henderson

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

MOBILE, Ala. – The Marines of Third Force Reconnaissance Battalion held a family day recently at the reserve center here to teach families what to expect during the unit's deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

Providing family members with quality information about TRICARE benefits was paramount. TRICARE, the Department of Defense's military health system, has several rules dealing with Reserve service members called to active duty that warranted attention.

"As a reservist called to active duty, for anything greater than 30 days, you are entitled to a TRICARE package, including medical and dental, just as your active-duty counterparts receive as a benefit," said HMC Scott Mason, lead corpsman, Third Reconnaissance Battalion.

As soon as a Reserve Marine reports for active duty, he or she is covered by TRICARE for any injury, illness or disease incurred or aggravated in the line of duty. After 30



continuous days on active duty, the Marine's immediate family members become eligible for TRICARE coverage.

"Reserve component members on active duty for more than 30 consecutive days, must enroll in TRICARE Prime," according to the TRICARE Web site, www.tricare.org. "Under this plan, you will be assigned a primary care manager to provide or arrange for your family's healthcare needs. You will also have access to additional wellness and preventive care services."

The first step a Marine must take before his family is covered by TRICARE is to ensure his family members are enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).

"To enroll family members in DEERS, visit a local personnel office that has a uniformed

services ID card facility. To locate the nearest ID card facility, visit the DEERS Web site (www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl)," said Mason.

During the family day, Third Force Reconnaissance Battalion representatives and Key Volunteer Network spokespersons took time to share their experiences on deployment with other family members.

"I found it very comforting," said Crystal Dekker, wife of Lance Cpl. Andrew Dekker, rifleman, Third Force Reconnaissance Battalion. "Today gave me a lot of information, and it makes me a little more settled for when he's away. Now I know someone's going to be here to help take care of me, and that means a lot."

The deploying Marines from Third Force Recon. Battalion will leave for Southwest Asia later this spring after a brief training stop at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

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by surprise, was the sudden dip of temperatures and snow.

"We were surprised to have cold-weather training here. Not many of the Royal Marines have seen snow before, coming from such a warm climate," said Holwerda.

During the training, Curacao was in the 80s and Quantico in the 20s and 30s or colder.

The exchange fosters better working relationships and understanding between allied forces. "The best part about training with the Royal Marines was meeting them and experiencing a bit of their culture. Learning their operational strategies was a great experience," said Kuhn.

The weekend's liberty brought the two units together in downtown Washington, where they spent time visiting national monuments and getting to know one another.

"We had a lot of fun downtime, and the Marines interacted very well. They are talking and exchanging military items with their counterparts, and generally have the same sense of humor," Holwerda said.

"It's a good atmosphere for the Marines to learn in since they get along so well. They are training each other, and that is what we came here for," Holwerda said.



Mark Turney

As a team, two Marines, one from Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, and one from 31st Company, Royal Netherlands Marine Corps, assault a building at the rear end of the military operations in urbanized terrain site at the Marine Corps Base Quantico MOUT facility, Quantico, Va.

4th Force Recon Marine is Honolulu's 'Top Cop'

Cpl. Monroe F. Seigle

MCB Hawaii Public Affairs Office

HONOLULU — The son of a San Francisco police officer and a reconnaissance Marine with 4th Force Reconnaissance Company aboard MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Staff Sgt. Patrick Sterling knew before he graduated from El Camino High School, San Francisco, he wanted to be a police officer just like his father.

He also knew that by joining the Marine Corps, he could better himself in many different ways before accomplishing his dream of being a law enforcement officer.

Full of motivation to get his life on the road and begin a bright future, Sterling enlisted in the Corps in 1988, only a few days after graduating from high school.

"The four years I served in the Marine Corps, I was stationed in Hawaii," Sterling said. "They instilled the values in me that all good policemen should have, such as integrity, respect and having pride in the uniform you wear."

Sterling left the active duty ranks in 1992 as a corporal. Less than a month later, he was at the police academy training to be a Honolulu police officer. Although Sterling was excited to begin his new career in law enforcement, he decided to continue to serve his country in the Marine Corps Reserve.

Sterling quickly established himself as being a top-notch police officer who strived for the best in every task at hand — just like all good Marines do. He became a member of the Specialized Service Division, working mostly in downtown Honolulu.

Working in the SSD gave Sterling the chance to distinguish himself as an elite police officer by being one of the officers who are first at the scene of dangerous situations, resolving them with the aid of special weapons and tactics.

In early 2003, Sterling was recalled to active duty, along with many Marines from 4th Force Recon to deploy to Iraq and fight the war against terror in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"I knew there was always a chance that I would get deployed to fight in combat, and so did all the other guys in the unit," said Sterling, who is a husband and father to five children



courtesy of the Honolulu Police Department

Police Commissioner L. Leong (L) and Police Chief Lee Donohue along with Staff Sgt. Patrick Sterling (center), Hawaii's Top Cop.

ages seven months to 13 years old. "We knew beforehand that there was a pretty good chance we would have to go; so when the time came, we were not too disappointed.

"We knew we were going to face danger. It was all around us, just like it was the first time I went to fight in Operation Desert Storm. Going back out there gave me a chance to once again appreciate all the things we take for granted in life."

Not long after Sterling returned from serving in combat, he was able to distinguish himself as the "Top Cop" in the Honolulu Police Department for the third year in a row.

The Top Cop competition challenges police officers in a variety of law enforcement skills, including firearms, arrest and control tactics, and the proper deployment of baton strikes and vascular neck restraints.

During the firearms competition, the police officers challenged each other in their marksmanship skills while firing 40-caliber hand pistols at numerous targets. Sterling showed off his ability to handcuff, employ knee strikes and use oleoresin capsicum, commonly known as pepper spray.

The final challenges were the 300-yard sprint, push-ups and sit-ups. Sterling completed 86 push-ups in one-minute, along with 81 sit-ups in one minute, before running a 300-yard sprint in 42 seconds. His scores surpassed 53 of his fellow HPD officers, earning him the title Top Cop for the third year in a row.

"The competition started right after I got home from Iraq," said Sterling. "I did not think I would do as good as I did in the past two years, because I gained 15 pounds while eating (meals, ready to eat) out in OIF. I did what the Marines taught me to do — my best at everything."



Maj. Dana Hyatt

Marine Cadets from New Haven, Conn., sit at attention during their graduation ceremony.

Marines lead cadets to Eagle, Globe, Anchor

Maj. Dana Hyatt

New Haven, Conn., PWST

NMCRC, New Haven, Conn. —Tucked away in the southwest corner of Connecticut is a Marine Cadet program providing direction and a sense of responsibility to a new generation of American youth.

On a recent Sunday afternoon, 39 recruits, ages 10-14, earned the title "Marine Cadet." Family and friends gathered at the reserve center for the

graduation ceremony.

After 16 weeks of training, the boys from the greater New Haven area gained a new feeling of pride and respect. They also gained self-discipline and a better appreciation of their responsibility to the community. As cadets, they will be participating in many events that serve both the Marine Corps and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Gunnery Sgt. C. Sobol, senior drill instructor, Sgt. R. Hakins and Cpls. A. Civitillo and J. Darling, Marines from Truck Plt. "A" and "B," 6th Motor Transportation Battalion, based at the drill center, volunteered to provide the leadership and guidance to the recruits undergoing training.

A former Marine and current attorney general for Connecticut, Richard Blumenthal attended the graduation. LtCol. Robert M. McGuiness, G-4, MarForRes, and guest speaker, challenged the new cadets to look within themselves. He told them, "Find out who you are first because what you wear doesn't matter; it's what's inside that counts!" He also said they should give of themselves and think about who their heroes are, and he related a story about his own hero, 2ndLt. John P. Bobo, Vietnam Medal of Honor recipient.

Proud parents Michael and Maria DeBenedet, looked on as their 11-year old son Kyle earned his eagle, globe and anchor. Kyle said he felt "excited, a feeling of accomplishment, more confident" and is even doing better in school. His mother said the program is a positive one for her son, citing his need to establish his own identity from that of his twin brother. Both she and her husband have noticed a huge improvement in his attitude and his confidence.

Many of the cadet's mothers commented on the changes they have seen, and said the Marine Cadet program has provided their sons with a positive focus and sense of direction. They have seen their boys demonstrate more respect for women, learn to work as a team, establish a better sense of self-worth along with achieving better grades at school.

According to Shantele Westley, her son, Cadet Charles Murray Jr.'s, grades improved dramatically, and he recently made the honor roll.

The cadets will carry with them a new respect for themselves and those they come in contact with every day. For many, this is the first step to a brighter future and a better chance of success in whatever future endeavors they choose.



Maj. Dana Hyatt

Cadets line up in the hallway ready to march in for their graduation ceremony.

Call Home: AAFES prepaid card offers best deal

Press Release

Family Readiness, Headquarters Marine Corps

DALLAS—Reports from the United States Central Command indicate that deployed military personnel have experienced difficulty when using phone cards in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom theaters. Because of this, the Army & Air Force Exchange Service is “reaching out” to let servicemembers know the dollars and cents of international telephone services as well as the benefits of AAFES’ global prepaid phone cards.

Examples CENTCOM has furnished illustrate that making international calls through third-party phone platforms can be unreasonably expensive. In some cases, as many as 58 minutes of a 60-minute prepaid phone card have been charged just to connect the call. Phone cards purchased at local post exchanges, base exchanges, tactical field exchanges and imprest fund sites (unit run Exchanges) are not subject to any connection fees or other hidden charges, which can be a large percent of the card’s total value.



Beyond connection fees, servicemembers as well as friends and family, should be aware that price-per-minute charges can also be much higher when placing a call using a credit card, calling card or other prepaid phone cards.

The myriad of phone options available can be very confusing. Many prepaid phone cards sold in the United States are designed for use within the 48 contiguous states. AAFES’ prepaid phone cards are designed for use on a global platform. This platform according to AAFES spokesperson Fred Bluhm, “is tailored to the unique needs of mobile service members.”

Before they even pick up the phone, Bluhm cautions military personnel to read the fine print. Many domestic or per-minute phone cards contain the phrase “International flat rates vary.” These rates

can vary widely. For example, AAFES’ 550-unit card is available for \$39 while its closest competitor’s 500-minute card sells for \$25. While the competitor’s card looks like a bargain, it is actually more expensive to use. Servicemembers who use the AAFES prepaid card receive three times as many minutes for calls placed from Kuwait to the United States. In this case, the cost is 21 cents per minute versus charges of 40 cents per minute.

According to Bluhm, “all phone cards are not created equal. It is important to let the troops and their loved ones know that cards from home may be subject to unforeseen charges.”

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service remains committed to keeping the lines of communication open and affordable for all Servicemembers during their deployment. AAFES prepaid phone cards are available, worldwide, at any AAFES retail location, through the AAFES Catalog or at aafes.com. AAFES prepaid phone cards are welcome at all 30 call centers AAFES operates in OIF/OEF regions. AAFES currently has five call centers in Iraq, eight in Afghanistan and 19 in Kuwait.

College of Continuing Education, Central Texas University team up

Press Release

Family Readiness, Headquarters Marine Corps

MCB QUANTICO – The MCCS Lifelong Learning Programs and the College of Continuing Education have partnered with Central Texas College to deliver three undergraduate college credit courses using a Deployable Learning Resource Center.

The general education classes are GOVT 2301 - American Government I, GOVT 2302 American Government II, and HUMA 1315 – Fine Arts Appreciation.

The DLRC is the hardware component of the Marine Corps Distance Learning Program that provides Marines with access to the electronic multimedia courseware when they are deployed. Each DLRC consists of a server, LAN switch, printer, and 20 laptop workstations. The server stores and distributes all electronic courseware and hosts the necessary management tools to monitor student progress. The laptop workstations are provided to the deployed Marine students to enable access to the distance learning content. Once the DLRC is networked on the LAN, all computers on the network will have access to the courseware.

Central Texas College is proud to be part of the pilot program delivering college-level courses for MarineNet, a Marine’s gateway to education and training online. CTC has nearly 40 years’ experience in providing education and training to military personnel and is the largest provider of Servicemember Opportunity College Agreements at the associate’s degree level.

The college credit courses that a Marine can take through MarineNet can be applied to a number of associate degree plans. You can receive up to 35 semester hours of credit from evaluations of

- Previous college courses
- Training and experience in the Marine Corps
- Challenge tests
- Training courses completed on MarineNet

Please visit the website at http://online.ctcd.edu/marinet/index_marinet.cfm or email marinenet@ctc-distd.net for further information on this new program.

ALOHA

VMFA 134 supports HCAX



Sgt. Joseph A. Lee

A Marine guides an F/A-18 into its position on the flightline during Hawaii Combined Arms Exercise. Marine Air Refueler Transport Squadron-452 and Marine Fighter Attack Squadron-134 participated in the Hawaii CAX.

Sgt. Joseph A. Lee

Marine Corps Base Hawaii Public Affairs Office

MCB HAWAII – Marine reserves supported the Hawaii Combined Arms Exercise in February, assisting 3rd Marine Regiment with close air support, while accomplishing their two-week annual training.

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron-134, out of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., supported the HCAX with six F/A-18C Hornets. The mission: dropping live missiles and bombs at the Pohakuloa Training Area on the big island of Hawaii.

“This year our annual two-week training period happened to coincide with the HCAX, so we could conduct our own training while assisting the regiment with their training,” said Maj. Mark Duffer, VMFA-134 safety officer. “We always enjoy coming to Hawaii to train. It’s a good morale booster for the troops and good payback for all the hard work they do.”

Staff Sgt. Jerry Esqueda, air frames supervisor, VMFA-134, is a banker and mortgage broker in his civilian life.

“It’s really neat seeing the way the unit comes together to accomplish the mission when you know the diverse jobs they all hold in the civilian world,” said Esqueda. “Some are students, some may fly professionally for large corporations, but when it’s time to put on

the uniform, the mission is all that is on our minds. It is really rewarding to see the dedication they all put into being Marines.”

The squadron’s annual training involves either air-to-ground or air-to-air operations.

“That’s the great thing about the Hornet,” said Duffer. “It is a dual-function aircraft, the ‘F/A’ in the title meaning that the aircraft is both a fighter and attack aircraft.”

The squadron flew across the Pacific in two distinct formations, performing aerial refueling along the way, according to Duffer.

“We came here in two formations of three F-18s, one formation following a KC-10 and one formation following a KC-135,” said Duffer. “When we return, we will be flying in one large formation following the KC-10. It’s really awesome to see the aerial formations and refueling operations from the sky as we travel. It is a series of precision movements that is very impressive.”

With the ability to mobilize in less than 24 hours, VMFA-134 was ready for any operation that may come its way and as excited to assist the ground units in this year’s exercise.

“The Marines performed exceptionally well,” said Duffer. “We accomplished all of the tasks in our training syllabus.”

Modernization brings MarForRes' Albany facility into 21st Century

Lance Cpl. Kevin Ridlon

MCLB Albany Public Affairs Office

MCLB ALBANY, Ga. — Lt. Gen. Dennis M. McCarthy, commander, Marine Forces Reserve, visited the Critical Asset Rapid Distribution Facility, formerly known as the Special Training Allowance Pool, here, March 5, to see the changes that have been made to the facility.

According to 1st Lt. Katherine S. Hayes, MarForRes, CARDF officer in charge, the facility recently underwent a huge modernization effort to bring it into the 21st century.

"We serve as the intermediate storage and distribution facility for new equipment being fielded to the Selected Marine Corps Reserve," Hayes said. "We hold prepositioned war stock, such as helmets, packs, tents and Gortex, for distribution to SMCR units if the need arises, and we will soon be prepositioning weapons and Electronic Key Management System material for distribution to reserve units if the need arises."

Before the big changes happened, the facility supplied critical Type III supply items, primarily cold weather gear, to reserve units for training.

"We are the liaison between MarForRes and the Logistics Command



Lance Cpl. Kevin J. Ridlon

Gunnery Sgt. Matthew M. Miller (left), Lt. Gen. Dennis M. McCarthy and 1st Lt. Katherine S. Hays, inspect one of the new racking systems that was set up in the new CARD facility.

for the repair of communication and electric items, and for any other issues," Hayes said.

Since the changes have taken place, CARDF now supports all of MarForRes with cold weather and desert equipment for both training evolutions and contingency operations.

"This is a really significant improvement for MarForRes' ability to deliver equipment when and where they need it," McCarthy said.

CARDF nearly doubled its storage space, has safer and more durable storage equipment, and now has a computerized

inventory management system.

"I have been to this warehouse facility before and I can really see the improvement this facility has made in the past six months or so," McCarthy said. "We are now able to go in and selectively off-load what we have stored to get the exact mixture of what we need."

McCarthy went on to say this change is not only due to lessons learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the importance of getting everything where it needs to be in a timely fashion, but also a product of the hard work by Albany Marines.

3rd CAG welcomes MFR commander to family day



Staff Sgt. Amy Forsythe

Lt. Gen. Dennis M. McCarthy offers his encouragement and show of support to Marines and their families during the 3rd Civil Affairs Group's family day at Camp Pendleton, Jan. 13.

He also thanked all of the servicemember's families for their support and wished them well for their deployment. 3rd CAG is currently deployed on a 7-month rotation to Iraq.

The Fine Print



A closer look at MARADMINs and ALMARs in order to help Marines gain a clearer understanding of the issues impacting the Reserve community.

MARADMIN 059/04

A recent investigation conducted by the Camp Pendleton Staff Judge Advocate concluded that last year certain agents of the Pioneer American Insurance Company misrepresented life insurance policies. As many as 500 active-duty and Reserve Marines may have purchased these policies at Camp Pendleton during the period of investigation. Pioneer has agreed to refund, upon request, all monies it received for policies sold to Marines at Camp Pendleton from March 2003 through December 2003. Marines are encouraged to contact their local legal assistance office for help receiving refunds.

ALMAR 011/04

The Marine Corps Merit Award in Safety was given to:

Ammunition Platoon, Ammunition Company,
4th Supply Battalion, 4th FSSG,
Newport News, Va.

MARADMIN 104/04

**SUPPLEMENT FY04 RESERVE ENLISTED
COMMISSIONING PROGRAM (RECP) BILLET
VACANCIES.**

4TH FSSG

ENGR CO A 6TH ESB FULSOM, Pa.
HQSVCCO (-), 6TH ESB PORTLAND, Ore.
DET 2 SUP CO (-) 4TH SUP BN
ALBANY, Ga.

4TH MARDIV

HQSVCCO (-) 8TH TANK BN
ROCHESTER, N.Y.
HQ BTRY 2/14 GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas
L CO 3/25 COLUMBUS, Ohio
HQ BTRY 2/14 GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas
F BTRY 2/14 OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla.
A CO 4TH CEB CHARLESTON, W.V.
B CO 4TH CEB ROANOKE, Va.
D CO 4TH CEB KNOXVILLE, Tenn.

4TH MAW

MWSS-473 DET B FT WORTH, Texas

**NOTE: * BILLETS RESTRICTED TO MALES ONLY, IAW
CHAPTER 5 OF REF D,
UNDER THE DIRECT COMBAT RULE.**

Check MARADMIN 018/04 for additional vacancies

